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ABSTRACT

A study of the attitudes of 673 public elementary teachers toward mainstreaming educable mentally retarded (EMR) students measured four aspects: the role of the EMR student in the mainstreaming process, the role of the EMR teacher in the mainstreaming process, the role of the elementary teacher in the mainstreaming process, and general mainstreaming concepts. Analysis (using the chi square test and the multivariate analysis of variance) revealed no significant mean differences in teacher responses toward mainstreaming when compared on the basis of teacher ages, degrees, experience, grade levels, or prior teaching experience with mainstreamed EMR students. Two clusters (statements dealing with the EMR student's role and statements on general mainstreaming concepts) produced significant differences between teachers when compared on the basis of prior or no prior teaching experience with mainstreamed EMR students. (Author/CL) bilities, Spri

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THE ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS TOWARD THE MAINSTREAMING OF EDUCABLE MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS IN NORTHWESTERN OHIO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

A Summary of the Study

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This study investigated the attitudes of public school elementary teachers towards the mainstreaming of EMR children into elementary classes. The instrument was comprised of four distinct clusters of statements: attitudes of teachers towards (1) the role of the EMR student in the mainstreaming process, (2) the role of the EMR teacher in the mainstreaming process, (3) the role of the elementary teacher in the mainstreaming process, and (4) general mainstreaming concepts.

Data utilized in the study were derived from a Likert-type instrument developed by the investigator and a panel of experts. Copies of the instrument were personally delivered to 59 school buildings in a nine county area of Northwestern Ohio. Of the 768 teachers contacted, 673 responded (86.7%), and 610 made up the final number of teachers who participated in the study. Statistical tests used to determine if significant differences existed between referent groups were the chi square test and the multivariate analysis of variance.

There were no significant mean differences in teacher responses toward mainstreaming when compared on the basis of teacher ages, degrees, experience, grade levels, or prior teaching experience with mainstreamed EMR children. However, a closer examination revealed that two clusters,

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(1) statements dealing with the role of the EMR student in the mainstreaming process, and (2) statements dealing with general mainstreaming concepts, produced several significant differences between teachers when compared on the basis of prior or no prior teaching experience with mainstreamed EMR students. Consequently, the specific statements that produced differences at the .05 level of significance using the chi square test, are as follows:

TABLE 1

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 5: EMR STUDENTS SHOULD REMAIN IN EMR CLASSES AT ALL TIMES BECAUSE OF BENEFITS OF SMALLER CLASS SIZE AND MORE EMPHASIS ON INDIVIDUALIZATION

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total % Who Disagree
Prior Experience	7.1	12.8	51.5	28.6	80.1
No Prior Experience	6.4	18.9	59.4	15.3	74.7

N = 610 Chi Square = 17.669 Probability = .0005

TABLE 2

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 7: EMR STUDENTS DO NOT HAVE THE EMOTIONAL STABILITY TO ATTEND A REGULAR CLASS

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total % Who Disagree
Prior Experience	3.7	16.5	65.0	14.5	79.5
No Prior Experience	3.8	24.0	63.3	9.0	72.3

N = 610 Chi Square = 7.862 Probability = .0489

TABLE 3

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 10: EMR STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM MAINSTREAMING BY BEING EXPOSED TO A VARIETY OF TEACHERS

	Total % Who Agree	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Prior Experience	79.8	9.4	70.4	14.1	6.1
No Prior Experience	65.5	5.8	59.7	29.7	4.8

N = 610 Chi Square = 22.531 Probability = .0001

TABLE 4

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 14: EMR STUDENTS IN THE MAINSTREAM WILL DEVELOP THEIR SOCIAL SKILLS AND ACADEMIC ABILITIES

	Total % Who Agree	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %
Prior Experience	74.1	11.1	63.0	25.9
No Prior Experience	71.1	4.8	66.5	28.8

N = 610 Chi Square = 8.465 Probability = .0145

TABLE 5

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 1: MAINSTREAMING INVOLVES A COORDINATED EFFORT BETWEEN THE EMR TEACHER, ELEMENTARY TEACHER, AND PRINCIPAL

	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %
Prior Experience	71.7	26.3	2.0
No Prior Experience	82.8	17.2	0

N = 610 Chi Square = 14.437 Probability = .0007

TABLE 6

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 4: MAINSTREAMING IS ONLY POSSIBLE IN CLASSES SUCH AS PHYSICAL EDUCATION, MUSIC, AND ART

	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total % Who Disagree
Prior Experience	13.5	47.8	38.7	86.3
No Prior Experience	16.3	56.9	26.8	83.7

N = 610 Chi Square = 9.796 Probability = .0075

TABLE 7

RESPONSES OF TEACHERS TOWARD STATEMENT 28: MAINSTREAMING WILL PROVE TO BE BENEFICIAL FOR MOST EMR STUDENTS

	Total % Who Agree	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
Prior Experience	73.7	18.5	55.2	22.2	4.0
No Prior Experience	69.3	10.2	59.1	25.9	4.8

N = 610 Chi Square = 8.749 Probability = .0322

The general conclusions drawn from the study were:

(1) Elementary teachers of various age groups do not differ in their attitudes towards the mainstreaming of EMR children.

(2) Elementary teachers with Bachelor degrees do not differ in their attitudes towards the mainstreaming of EMR children when compared with teachers who have Masters degrees.

(3) Elementary teachers with various years of teaching experience do not differ in their attitudes towards the mainstreaming of EMR children.

(4) Elementary teachers who teach primary grade level children do not differ in their attitudes towards the mainstreaming of EMR children when compared with teachers who teach intermediate grade level children.

(5) Elementary teachers with prior experience of teaching mainstreamed EMR children have a more positive attitude towards the role of the EMR student in the mainstreaming process and also towards general mainstreaming concepts than do teachers with no prior experience.

(6) Elementary teachers in general have positive attitudes towards the mainstreaming of EMR children, for example, out of 28 statement on the opinionnaire, 26 were answered in a positive manner.

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